

ACADEMIC BOARD (18th November 2009)

ANNUAL REPORT ON EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES 2008-09

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Executive summary

This paper provides an overview of the use made of the extenuating circumstances procedures by students during the academic year 2008-09. It includes statistical analysis of the number of claims received and accepted during 2008-09 and compares the number of students making use of the extenuation procedures during 2008-09 against figures for the previous three academic years. Data and analysis on equal opportunities monitoring are also included.

Annual Report on Extenuating Circumstances 2008-09

1 INTRODUCTION

This report covers the operation of the Extenuating Circumstances procedures for the year 2008-09. The current Extenuating Circumstances procedures have been in place since 2004-05. This report thus provides an overview of the procedures in the fifth year of operation.

There were no changes to extenuation procedures in 2008-09.

This year, extenuation data held by QAE was merged with information held on the DELTA database, in order to provide a more accurate set of statistics in respect of equal opportunities.

As with last year's report, the overall number of claims is indicated by component, as students apply for extenuation on a component by component basis. Each student-module may be subject to more than one claim for extenuation. Where we have examined the number of extenuation claims in relation to overall module registrations, we have therefore counted the number of student-modules subject to one or more extenuation claims, and therefore these figures are slightly lower.

2 SUMMARY OF EXTENUATION CLAIMS RECEIVED IN 2008-09

2.1 Table 1 provides a short summary of the number of extenuation claims received during 2008-09 (Semester A, Semester B and summer reassessments).

Table 1: Total component claims in 2008-09

Sem	Decision	AVA	BUS	CITE	EDU	H&BIO	HSS	LAW	PSY	Total
A	Accept	7	64	19	61	86	63	54	76	430
	Reject	11	35	37	31	62	102	38	33	349
A Total		18	99	56	92	148	165	92	109	771
B	Accept	30	63	27	55	104	97	60	70	506
	Reject	6	50	14	23	70	42	19	24	248
B Total		36	113	41	78	174	139	79	94	762
Resits	Accept		5	9	18	9	29	12	10	92
	Reject	3	22	29	24	18	27	25	15	163
R Total		3	27	38	42	27	56	37	25	255
TOTAL		57	239	135	212	349	360	208	228	1788
% Accepted		64.9%	55.2%	40.7%	63.2%	57.0%	52.5%	60.6%	79.0%	57.5%

Note: Rejected claims include technical rejects

Note: Excludes a small number of Sem C dissertation claims

2.2 Table 2 overleaf provides a more detailed overview of extenuation claims received in Semester A and Semester B in 2008-09 (excluding resits), by School, by component, by type of assessment (coursework or exam), and by claims accepted or rejected.

Table 3 summarises the total module applications for coursework and exams by School over Semesters A and B in 2008-09 and expresses this as a percentage of the total number of module registrations per school.

Table 2: TOTAL COMPONENT APPLICATIONS BY COURSEWORK AND EXAMS IN SEM A AND SEM B 2008-09

	TOTAL		AVA		BUS		CITE		EDU		HBIO		HSS		LAW		PSY	
	CW	EX	CW	EX	CW	EX	CW	EX	CW	EX	CW	EX	CW	EX	CW	EX	CW	EX
SEM A																		
No. Apps	500	278	17	1	61	38	30	26	92	0	76	72	155	10	38	54	31	77
No. Accepted	242	188	6	1	37	27	12	7	61	0	30	56	57	6	17	37	22	54
% Accepted	48.4	67.6	35.3	100	60.7	71.1	40.0	26.9	66.3	n/a	39.5	77.8	36.8	60.0	44.7	68.5	71.0	70.1
	+1n/k																+1n/k	
SEM B																		
No. Apps	512	242	33	3	68	45	27	14	78	0	103	71	132	7	29	50	42	52
No. Accepted	324	182	27	3	32	31	18	9	55	0	55	49	90	7	18	42	29	41
% Accepted	63.3	75.2	81.8	100	47.1	68.9	66.7	64.3	70.5	n/a	53.4	69.0	68.2	100	62.1	84.0	69.0	78.8
SEM A + B																		
No. Apps	1012	520	50	4	129	83	57	40	170	0	179	143	287	17	67	104	73	129
No. Accepted	566	370	33	4	69	58	30	16	116	0	85	105	147	13	35	79	70.0	95
% Accepted	55.9	71.2	66.7	100	53.5	69.9	52.6	40.0	68.2	n/a	47.5	73.4	51.2	76.5	52.2	76.0	69.0	73.6
	+1n/k																+1n/k	
TOTAL																		
No. Apps	1533		54		212		97		170		322		304		171		203	
No. Accepted	936		37		127		46		116		190		160		114		146	
% Accepted	61.1%		68.5%		59.9%		47.4%		68.2%		59.0%		52.6%		66.7%		71.9%	

Table 3: STUDENT-MODULE APPLICATIONS IN SEM A AND SEM B 2008-09

	TOTAL	AVA	BUS	CITE	EDU	HBIO	HSS	LAW	PSY
SEM A + B: Modules with Extenuation	1317	45	193	88	152	276	257	157	149
No. Accepted	798	31	112	42	109	157	138	107	102
Total Module registrations	70330	5748	12938	10729	5674	9826	14721	6021	4561
% Extenuation	1.9%	0.8%	1.5%	0.8%	2.7%	2.8%	1.7%	2.6%	3.3%
% Accepted	1.1%	0.5%	0.9%	0.4%	1.9%	1.6%	0.9%	1.8%	2.2%

Note: Component totals include one component application (+1n/k) where type of assessment was unknown

Note: No extenuation applications were received from the Graduate School. Applications received from UEL Connect students were processed through other Schools.

Note: Module totals include withdrawn modules and are for UEL based students only

- 2.3 A total of 1533 extenuation claims for components were made for Semester A and Semester B in 2008-09. This was slightly less than the total number of component claims for the same period in 2007-08 (1564). As usual, there were slightly more claims for extenuation in Semester A (779) than in Semester B (754).
- 2.4 The pattern of coursework to examination claims also mirrored that of previous years. More extenuation claims were submitted for coursework components (1012) than for exams (520). However, claims for coursework components were less likely to be accepted (55.9% compared to 71.2% for exams). This is to be expected given the long lead time for submission of coursework and the ability for students to manage their time around any mishaps.
- 2.5 The percentage of successful component claims was higher in Semester B for both coursework and exams (66.3% and 75.2% respectively, as compared to 48.4% and 67.8% in Semester A).
- 2.6 As in last year's report, the Schools of AVA and Psychology had the highest acceptance rate of extenuation claims per component in 2008-09 (68.5% and 71.9%). The School of Law, which last year had the lowest acceptance rate, came third highest this year with 66.7%. The School with the lowest proportion of successful component claims in 2008-09 was Computing, IT and Engineering, with less than half (47.4%) of all claims attaining a successful outcome.
- 2.7 In order to measure the extent of claims for extenuation, and provide a school to school comparison, we compared the number of student-modules subject to an extenuation claim in 2008-09 to the total number of module registrations for each school (Table 3). Using this method we found that, as in the previous year, Psychology modules were subject to the highest overall proportion of claims (3.3%). Other schools with a relatively high proportion of claims were Health & Bioscience (2.8%), Law (2.6%) and Education (2.7%) (although the module registration count for Education excludes PGCE type programmes). As per last year, AVA and CITE were found to have the lowest proportion of module claims (both at 0.8%).
- 2.8 Comparing the number of successful student-module claims for extenuation to the total number of module registrations for each school revealed Psychology to have the highest proportion of student-modules subject to successful claims (2.2%). The second and third highest were in Education (1.9%) and Law (1.8%). The schools which had the lowest proportion of successful claims, AVA (0.5%) and CITE (0.4%), were also the schools with the lowest module claim averages.

2.9 The following table details the number of component claims which were technical rejects in Semesters A and B, and in the summer reassessment period. Technical rejects are those from students who were applying for extenuation in modules already capped or who were on their fourth opportunity (except where the student was applying for late submission of coursework). These claims are not considered by the Extenuation Panel, and are automatically rejected.

Sem		AVA	BUS	CITE	EDU	HBIO	HSS	LAW	PSY	Total
A	tech rejects	2	5	14	9	18	8	7	7	70
	total comps	15	99	56	92	147	161	92	109	771
	% of total	11.1%	5.1%	25.0%	9.8%	12.2%	4.8%	7.6%	6.4%	9.0%
B	tech rejects	1	10	4	2	17	2	4	7	47
	total comps	36	113	41	78	174	139	79	94	762
	% of total	2.8%	8.8%	9.8%	2.6%	9.8%	1.4%	5.1%	7.4%	6.2%
Resits	tech rejects	1	16	15	7	12	8	11	10	80
	total comps	3	27	38	42	27	56	37	25	255
	% of total	33.3%	59.3%	39.5%	16.7%	44.4%	14.3%	29.7%	40.0%	31.4%
Total	tech rejects	4	31	33	18	47	18	22	24	197
	total comps	57	239	135	212	349	360	208	228	1788
	% of total	7.0%	13.0%	24.4%	8.5%	7.7%	5.0%	10.6%	10.5%	11.0%

Table 4: Technical Reject claims by component and as a percentage of total claims

2.10 The percentage of technical reject claims received during the summer reassessment period (highlighted in bold above) is always significantly larger than in Semesters A or B, because more students will have capped modules. The overall percentage of claims which were technical rejects in the summer reassessment period of 2008-09 (31.4%) was, however, lower than that for the same period in 2007-08 (43.7%).

2.11 As in previous years, statistics for technical rejects revealed a considerable spread: CITE and Business had the highest overall percentage of technical rejects (24.4% and 13.0% respectively), whereas HSS and AVA had the lowest (5.0% and 7.0% respectively). The outlook was somewhat different in the summer reassessment period, when Business and Health & Biosciences had the highest percentage of technical rejects (59.3% and 44.4% respectively) while Humanities and Social Sciences still had a relatively low percentage of 14.3%.

3 ANALYSIS OF EXTENUATION CLAIMS

3.1 Number of Claims Received

Following a significant decrease in the total number of applications for extenuation between 2004-05 and 2005-06, this number has continued to rise slowly but steadily in subsequent academic years. It was therefore surprising that the total number of component claims in Semesters A and B 2008-09 (1531) was slightly lower than the total received during the same period of 2007-08 (1564). This was also true of the number of student-module claims (1428 in 2007-08 and 1317 in 2008-09). When considered as a percentage of total student module enrolments (1.9%), there was a

slight reduction in comparison with 2007-08, although this proportion has remained fairly consistent during the past few years (2.1% in 2005-06, 2.2% in 2006-07, and 2.3% in 2007-08).

The following tables compare module applications by School for Semesters A and B in 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09, and also consider these figures as a proportion of total module enrolments.

School	Apps by student module 2005-06	Apps by student module 2006-07	Apps by student module 2007-08	Apps by student module 2008-09	% of total modules 2005-06	% of total modules 2006-07	% of total modules 2007-08	% of total modules 2008-09
AVA	42	46	33	45	0.8%	0.9%	0.6%	0.8%
BUS	105	177	171	193	1.3%	2.0%	1.6%	1.5%
CITE	66	74	98	88	0.8%	0.9%	1.1%	0.8%
EDU	90	124	127	152	2.3%	2.7%	2.3%	2.7%
H&BIO	143	196	259	276	1.2%	2.3%	2.7%	2.8%
HSS	344	327	330	257	2.8%	2.6%	2.5%	1.7%
LAW	170	165	230	157	4.4%	2.9%	3.8%	2.6%
PSY	170	167	180	149	4.5%	4.0%	3.6%	3.3%
TOTAL	1150	1276	1428	1317	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%	1.9%

Table 5 - extenuation claims by student module 2005-2009, this institution only

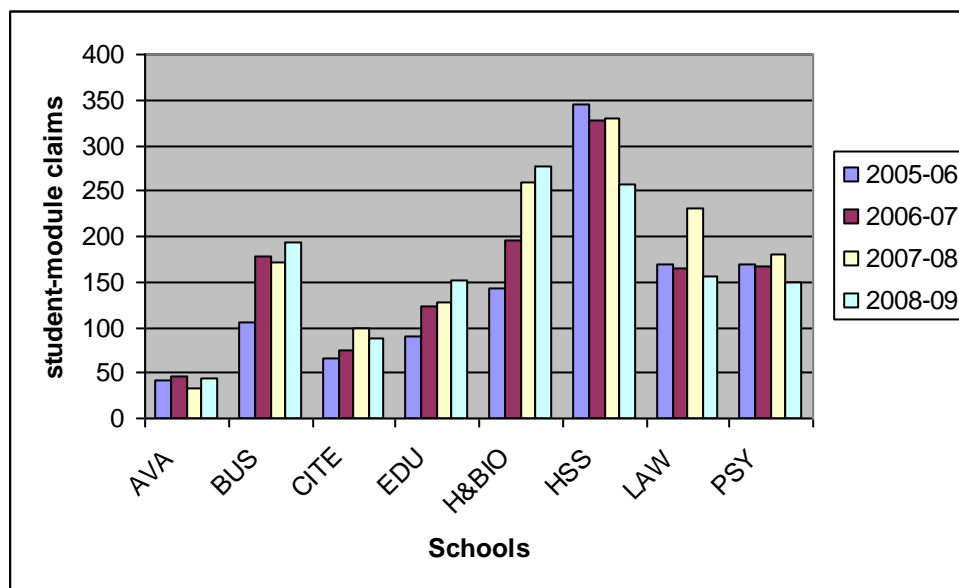


Table 5a – No. of Extenuation Claims (modules) received per School in Semesters A and B, 2005-2009

Table 5a shows variability across the Schools in relation to the number of claims for extenuation submitted in Semesters A and B 2008-09 compared to the number submitted in Semesters A and B in the previous two academic years.

Approximately half the Schools have seen an increase in the number of claims during 2008-09, while the other half have seen numbers fall. Both HSS and Law had substantially lower student-module claims in 2008-09 than in the previous year.

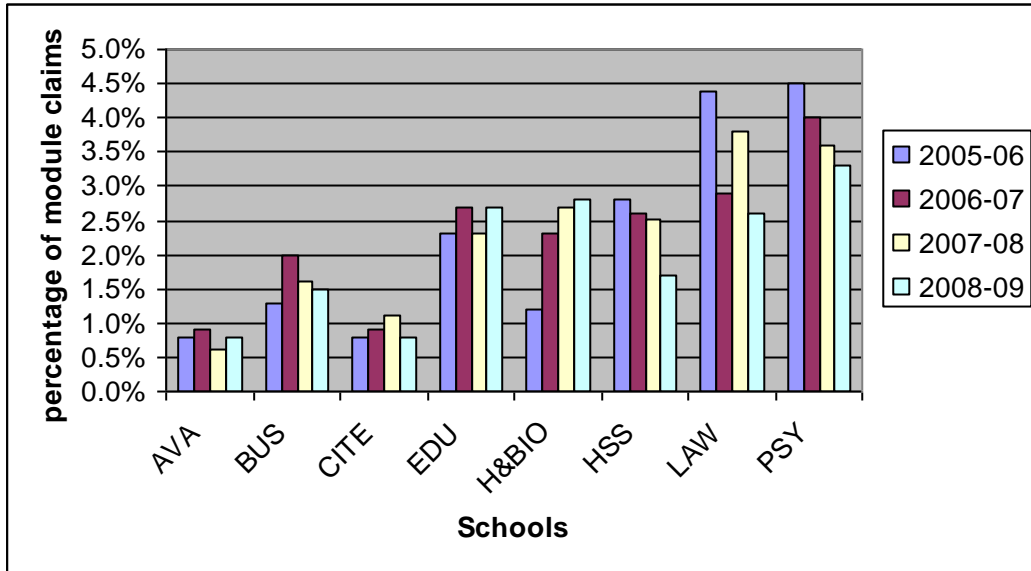


Table 5b – No. of extenuation claims (modules) received per School in Semesters A and B expressed as a proportion of total student modules (2005-09), this institution only

The pattern is similar when considering student-module applications as a percentage of the total number of student modules (Table 5b above).

3.2 Number of Claims Accepted

The table below describes the proportion of successful component claims as a percentage of the total number of component claims per school during the past four academic years.

School	% Accepted 2005-06	% Accepted 2006-07	% Accepted 2007-08	% Accepted 2008-09
AVA	49	70	77.5	68.5
BUS	54	48	68.1	59.9
CITE	59	35	61.1	47.7
EDU	35	43	51.9	68.2
H&BIO	63	54	57.3	59.0
HSS	44	51	51.7	52.6
LAW	43	46	48.1	66.7
PSY	58	65	75	71.9
TOTAL	50	52	58.8	61.1

Table 6 – Percentage of component claims accepted per School 2005-9

While the overall percentage of claims accepted has increased this year, individual Schools have shown differing trends, with success rates in some schools (Business, CITE and Psychology) showing a reduction.

The bar chart below illustrates variation between schools, and the general trend for an increased percentage of successful component claims in the last four academic years.

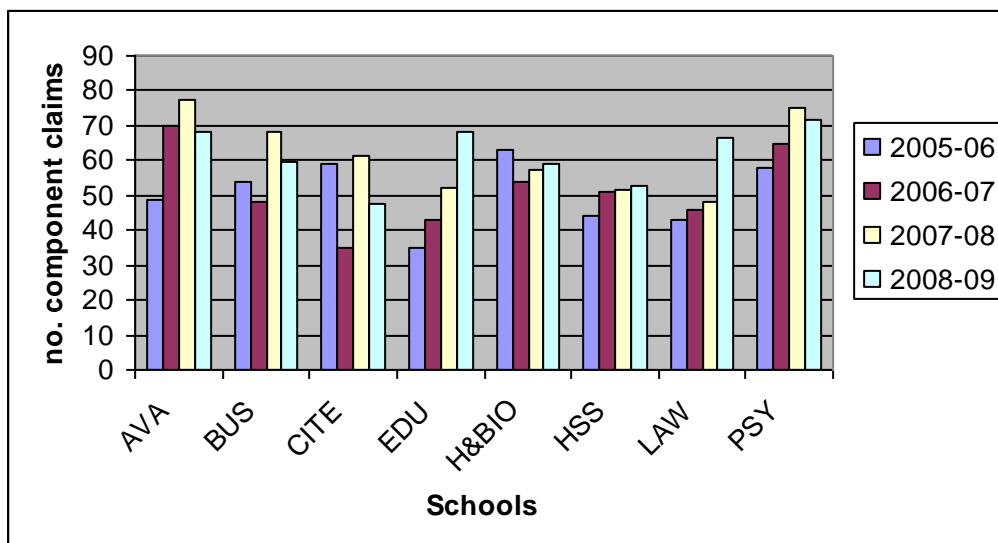


Table 6a – Percentage of component claims accepted per School 2005-09

3.3 Resit Claims for Extenuation

The number of component claims for extenuation received for reassessments and resits has varied over the past few years, falling from 270 in 2005-06 to 217 in 2006-07, and then rising to 247 in 2007-08. In 2008-09, the figure again rose slightly, to 255 claims. The number of claims for extenuation in the resit period will clearly depend on the number of students resitting modules and is therefore not easily comparable year-on-year.

As previously explained, technical rejects are claims from students who are applying for extenuation in a module which is already capped or where the student is on their fourth opportunity for the module (except where the student is applying for extenuation for late submission of coursework); and there is a higher percentage of technical rejects in the reassessment period. The following tables provide an illustrated comparison of the percentage of component claims which were technical rejects for each School during the reassessment period of the academic years 2005-9.

School	% of Technical Rejects 2005-06	% of Technical Rejects 2006-07	% of Technical Rejects 2007-08	% of Technical Rejects 2008-09
AVA	75	100	16.7	33.3
BUS	95	41	51.7	59.3
CITE	65	88	38.9	39.5
EDU	25	13	54.3	16.7
H&BIO	69	46	69.2	44.4
HSS	26	40	31.7	14.3
LAW	43	59	52.6	29.7
PSY	57	23	8.0	40.0
TOTAL	53	42	43.7	31.4

Table 7– percentage of technical rejects at reassessment 2005-9

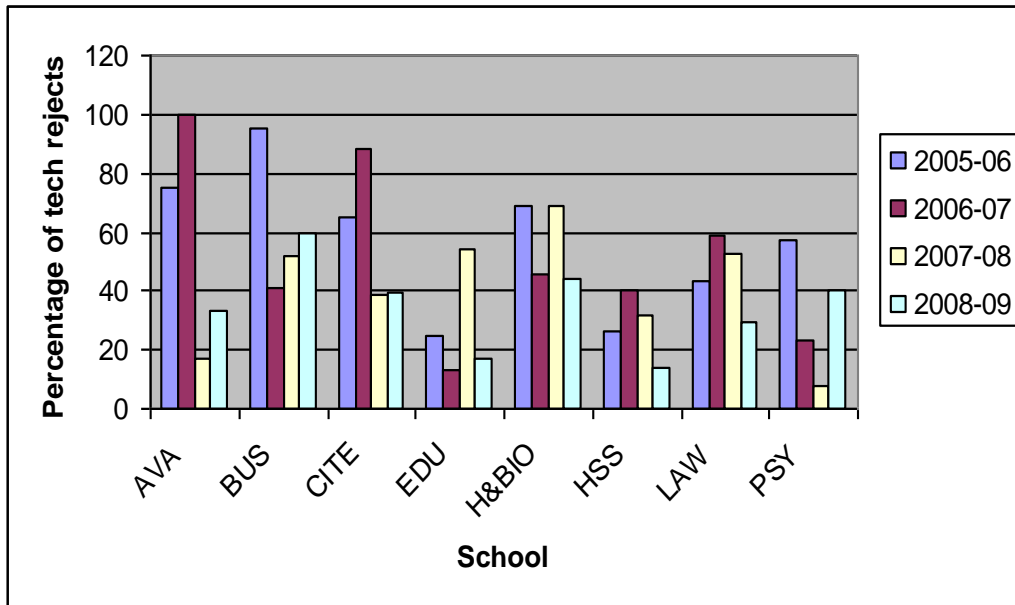


Table 7a - percentage of technical rejects by component at reassessment 2005-9

The average percentage of technical reject claims has significantly reduced this year, indicating a general increase in student awareness and understanding of the regulations, which may in part be due to changes made to the application form used during the summer reassessment period in 2008-09.

This year, an additional self-assessment grid was added to the front of the form over the summer vacation, whereby students could see whether their application would be a technical reject or not by ticking boxes relating to their own individual circumstances. Despite this aid, however, many students still chose to apply for extenuation, even though they understood that, according to the regulations, their claim would be automatically rejected. These students were invited to comment on their motives on the form. In the majority of cases, students indicated that they did understand the letter of the law, but were seeking for an exception to be made to the regulations.

This year an analysis was made of the number of technical reject claims submitted from students with known learning disabilities. The results are included in the following section.

4 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING

In previous years, our equal opportunities monitoring data has been captured by using an equal opportunities monitoring form attached to the extenuation form. This year, we merged our extenuation data with data stored centrally on DELTA in order to obtain a more complete and accurate picture of equal opportunities trends. Although the majority of students applying for extenuation in 2008-09 chose to complete the equal opportunities monitoring form, many did not submit this with their form, or left sections of the monitoring form incomplete.

The equal opportunities monitoring form is detached from the extenuation form by Quality Assurance and Enhancement upon receipt of the form. No claim is considered by the extenuation panel with the equal opportunities monitoring form still attached. However, there was evidence to suggest that some students misunderstood the purpose of the form (e.g. as an opportunity to disclose a previously undisclosed disability in a few cases), or wrongly assumed that that data would be considered as part of their extenuation claim. This seems to have had an adverse effect on the accuracy of our statistics. In 2008-09, just 112 students declared a disability on our Equal Opportunities Monitoring form, yet data gathered from DELTA revealed that 149 of the students had a disability. From 2009-10 we intend to gather all our equal opportunities data from DELTA.

4.1 Gender

The following table displays information about both the number of components applied for by gender, and the actual number of students who applied for extenuation by gender during Semesters A and B and the resit period of 2008-09.

	No. component applications	No. Accepted	%accepted	No. of students who applied	No. of students enrolled	% students who applied
Female	1169	728	62.3	629	9198	6.8
Male	598	284	47.5	341	7870	4.3
Unknown	21	16	76.2	12	5	n/a
TOTAL	1788			982	17073	

Table 8 – Extenuation Statistics 2008-09 by Gender

The statistics above demonstrate that, in 2008-09, females were more likely to claim extenuation than males (6.8% as opposed to 4.3%) and that their applications were more likely to be accepted (62.3% of component applications as against 47.5% for males). These percentages remained roughly the same when the resit period data was excluded (66.9% for females, 49.2% for males).

4.2 Ethnicity

The table below provides a breakdown by ethnicity of the number of extenuation claims received in Semesters A, B and the resit period of 2008-09, and the number of students who applied for these.

	No. Component applications	No. accepted	%accepted	Students who applied	Students enrolled	% who applied
WHITE						
White British	235	152	64.7%	106	3195	3.3%
White Irish	21	11	52.4%	8	195	4.1%
White Other	74	41	57.7%	35	1001	3.5%
Total	330	204	61.8%	149	4391	3.4%
ASIAN or ASIAN BRITISH						
Bangladeshi	103	64	62.1%	55	1034	5.3%
Indian	67	36	53.7%	39	1590	2.5%
Pakistani	125	76	50.7%	67	840	8.0%
Chinese	9	7	77.8%	4	221	1.8%
Asian Other	55	27	49.1%	38	880	4.3%
Total	359	210	58.5%	203	4565	4.4%
BLACK or BLACK BRITISH						
African	548	302	55.1%	314	3805	8.3%
Caribbean	173	95	54.9%	107	1150	9.3%
Black Other	54	33	61.1%	26	372	7.0%
Total	775	430	55.5%	447	5327	8.4%
MIXED PARENTAGE						
White and Asian	5	3	60.0%	5	104	4.8%
White and Black African	25	11	65.0%	16	180	8.9%
White and Black Caribbean	21	15	53.3%	13	181	7.2%
Mixed Background Other	42	27	46.1%	21	256	8.2%
Total	93	56	60.2%	55	721	7.6%
OTHER	73	38	52.1%	42	868	4.8%
NOT KNOWN	158	90	57.3%	86	1204	7.1%
TOTAL	1788			982	17076	

Table 9 – Extenuation Statistics 2008-09 by Ethnicity

This year, our equal ops data was based on that held centrally on DELTA, and included applications made during the resit period of 2008-09. The success rates for all umbrella groups appear to be more evenly distributed than in the previous year's data, with percentages falling between the fairly narrow range of 55.5% - 61.8%. When the data was broken down further it showed more variation, although this might in part be due to the low numbers of applicants in certain categories (e.g. only four Chinese students applied for extenuation, but achieved a 77.8% success rate).

As usual, comparing the number of students applying for extenuation against the total number of students enrolled revealed some interesting patterns that largely mirror the trends that we have seen in previous years. There was an increasing likelihood of applying through White (3.4%), Asian or Asian British (4.4%) Mixed Parentage (7.6%) and Black or Black British students (8.4%). Black Caribbean students were most likely to apply for extenuation (9.3%), while Chinese students were least likely to apply (1.8%).

4.3 Disability

The table below gives the breakdown of extenuation claims during Semester A, Semester B and the resit period of 2008-09, according to data on the claimant's disability. This year, we have included data on disability type.

	No. claims	No. accepted	% accepted	Students applying	Students enrolled	% who applied
Blind/partial sight	7	2	28.6%	2	32	6.3%
Deaf/partial hearing	6	2	33.3%	4	45	8.9%
Learning disability	142	92	65.8%	73	739	9.9%
Mental health	49	33	67.3%	17	71	23.9%
Multiple disabilities	26	14	53.8%	14	64	21.9%
Wheelchair/mobility	29	21	72.4%	7	65	10.8%
Unseen disability	42	31	73.8%	25	156	16.0%
Other disability	18	10	55.6%	7	136	5.1%
Not known	43	29	67.4%	27	193	14.0%
No disability	1426	794	55.7%	806	15575	5.2%
Grand Total	1788	1028	57.5%	982	17076	

Table 10 – Extenuation Statistics 2008-09 by Disability

The statistics suggest that, in general, students with known disabilities were more likely to apply for extenuation than students with no known disability. Students with mental health disabilities were the group most likely to apply for extenuation (23.9%).

Per component claim, the acceptance rate for disabled students was generally either close to or higher than the average acceptance rate across categories. This has been the case in most years. The notable exceptions were students with sight or hearing difficulties, who met with acceptance rates of 28.6% and 33.3% respectively. However, these unusual statistics may be due to the very small number of students from these categories applying.

Table 11 overleaf considers the number of technical reject claims in Semesters A, B and the reassessment period of 2008-09, with reference to disability data. As previously explained, technical rejects are claims from students who are applying for extenuation in a module which is already capped or where the student is on their fourth opportunity for the module (except where the student is applying for extenuation for late submission of coursework).

	Sem A	Sem B	Resit	Total	% of Total
Blind/partial sight	0	0	0	0	n/a
Deaf/partial hearing	1	0	0	1	0.5%
Learning disability	0	4	8	12	5.6%
Mental health	2	2	7	11	5.6%
Multiple disabilities	3	2	5	10	5.1%
No disability	60	41	54	155	78.7%
Not known	0	0	3	3	1.5%
Other disability	0	1	0	1	0.5%
Unseen disability	1	0	2	3	1.5%
Wheelchair/mobility	0	0	1	1	0.5%
Total	67	51	80	197	

Table 11 – Technical Reject statistics by disability 2008-09

The vast majority of technical reject claims were submitted by students with no known disability. The relatively small percentage of technical reject claims from students with a learning disability (5.6%) is roughly consonant with the overall percentage of enrolled students who have declared themselves as having this type of disability (4.7%), and indicates that these students are not experiencing particular problems in coming to grips with our regulations and procedures for extenuating circumstances. On the other hand, the percentage of technical reject claims from students with mental health difficulties (5.6%) or multiple disabilities (5.6%) was disproportionately high in relation to the overall number of such students enrolled during the period 2008-09 (each representing just 0.4% of the student population). Students from these categories were also the most likely to apply for extenuation (see Table 10 above).

4.4 Age

Due to the more detailed nature of the equal opportunities data extracted from DELTA, we are now able to give a breakdown of applications according to age. The following table displays information about both the number of components applied for, and the actual number of students from each age range who applied for extenuation during Semesters A and B and the reassessment period of 2008-09.

	No. claims	No. accepted	% accepted	No. students applying	No. students enrolled	% who applied
Under 21	102	39	38.2%	62	4870	1.3%
21 - 24	517	301	58.2%	285	4369	6.5%
25 - 29	332	197	59.3%	177	3081	5.7%
30 - 34	244	151	61.9%	148	1671	8.9%
Over 35	518	305	58.9%	266	3072	8.7%
Unknown	75	35	46.7%	44	13	n/a

Total 1788 1028 982 17076

Table 12 – Extenuation statistics 2008-09 by age range

The statistics reveal that students aged over 21 were far more likely to apply for extenuation than those aged under 21, and were also more likely to make a successful claim. Students in the 30-34 age group were the most likely to apply for extenuation, and were the most successful claimants.

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 There has been a slight decrease in the total number of extenuation claims received in 2008-09 in comparison to 2007-08. When considered as a proportion of the total number of student module registrations, the overall percentage of claims has remained stable throughout the past four academic years. It should be noted that there have been no significant changes to the advice provided to students on extenuating circumstances on the UEL website or from the Students' Union. Academic and administrative staff have also continued to refer students to the information on the website and to the Students' Union for advice.
- 5.2 The academic year 2008-09 once more saw an increase in the number of extenuation claims that were accepted. It is noticeable that the quality of the claims submitted has further improved, with a smaller number of claims being submitted for IT related problems, transport problems, misreading of assessment timetables and inadequate planning. In addition, during the reassessment period, the number of technical reject claims was significantly reduced. Once again the Students' Union Advice and Information Service have played a key role in ensuring that the quality of the claims is of a higher standard.
- 5.3 This year, we took active measures to help reduce the number of technical reject claims and to understand the reasons why students make claims at reassessment when they know that their module is capped. We provided an interactive guidance form on the front page of the application form over the summer period, surveyed students about their reasons for applying when capped, and also analysed equal opportunities data to ensure that students with dyslexia or other learning disabilities were not disadvantaged by the regulations. In the majority of cases, we found no evidence to suggest that technical reject applications are made because students don't understand the regulations. These findings have lent weight to our previous hypothesis that emotional and financial factors were behind the trend.
- 5.4 Merging QAE data with data held on DELTA has greatly enhanced our capacity for reporting on diversity and equal opportunities trends. This year, the data was both more complete and more accurate than in previous years, and it is likely to improve yet further in quality and scope next year. On the whole, this year's data revealed no significant trends in regards to diversity and equal opportunities. While our findings on gender revealed the usual imbalance between male and female applications and success rates, the general trend in ethnicity success rates was fairly even. This year's disability data was far richer than that provided in 2008-09 and, with a small number of exceptions, revealed little cause for concern. While the number of applications from students with mental health issues and multiple disabilities was high, these students

also enjoyed a relatively high rate of success. In addition, the higher than average success rate for students with learning disabilities should prove reassuring.

- 5.5 It is noted that the Students' Union Advice and Information Service have provided much valuable help to students deciding whether to apply for extenuation, and the current success of our extenuation system is in large part due to the high standard of the advice and assistance they habitually provide. Indeed, the SUAIS and the extenuation web pages are our students' only sources of information about extenuating circumstances. It is therefore particularly important that the Students' Union continues to maintain the same level of service to our students in respect of advice and information, as failure to maintain a proper and robust system of extenuation would be detrimental to the student experience, and to the proper treatment of exceptional cases.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That Academic Board approve this report.
- 6.2 That the equal opportunities data for future reports be taken directly from DELTA, and that the current practice of conducting separate equal opportunities monitoring on the extenuation form be discontinued.

7 Equality impact assessment

Equality analysis of extenuation is covered in the main body of the report.